

Metra is coming; work begins on Romeoville station

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By Grace Tucker

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After years in the making, construction is beginning on the new Romeoville Metra station.

Mayor John Noak, U.S. Congressman Dan Lipinski, Will County Executive Larry Walsh, and Metra Executive Director/CEO Don Orseno officially broke ground on the Romeoville Metra Station, a new stop along the Heritage Corridor Line.

“Getting a Metra stop has been a village goal for a long time, so we’re very excited to break ground today,” said Noak. “Having another transportation link to the city will be a great benefit for residents as well as businesses.”

Located near the intersection of 135th Street and New Avenue, the Romeoville Station will be the first new stop on the Heritage Corridor since Metra’s creation in 1984 and the first new stop on any Chicagoland Metra line since 2011. Construction is to be completed in the fall of this year, giving Romeoville residents a direct connection to downtown Chicago just in time for the holiday season. Passengers on the Heritage Corridor line arrive in Chicago at Union Station.

The new station initiative began in 2008, when one of Romeoville’s largest industrial residents, Citgo Petroleum Company, was about to expand and build a new plant. At the time, the village and the company struck a deal. In exchange for variances that allowed for an additional parking lot to be constructed across from the plant on 135th Street, Citgo offered to lease eight acres of land to the village for a long-sought Metra station. “Once completed, this new station will mean more people in Romeoville and the surrounding area will be able to spend less of their valuable time each day driving on congested roads or traveling to less convenient Metra stations,” said Lipinski. “As the most senior member from Illinois on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and co-chair of the Congressional Public Transit Caucus, I would like to thank Mayor John Noak, the Village of Romeoville, Will County Executive Larry Walsh, and Metra for their hard work on this important project.”

The project is estimated at \$4.9 million dollars with more than \$3.9 million of the funding through CMAP’s Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Grant. The Village of Romeoville was also fortunate to receive a supplemental grant from the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) for pedestrian access from 135th St to the Station.

“We look forward to the day in the not-too-distant future when we’ll be able to add ‘Romeoville’ to our system maps and to the list of communities served by Metra,” said Metra Executive Director/CEO Don Orseno. “I would like to thank Mayor Noak and Romeoville for their persistence in seeing this project to fruition, and thank Congressman Lipinski for being a champion of public transportation and a friend to Metra and Romeoville.”

The first phase of the station will have 123 parking spaces and support an advanced parking system, which will allow commuters the option to pay for their spots from their mobile phones in addition to the traditional method.

“Will County is one of the fastest growing counties in Illinois and improvements like this new Metra stop will offer another transportation option for our residents,” said Will County Executive Larry Walsh. “A great transit system is key to economic development and maintaining a high quality of life. We are proud to work with Congressman Lipinski, Mayor Noak and Executive Director Orseno to keep Will County and our region moving forward.”